

General Comment on **H.B. No. 6659: An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor**
February 27, 2023

Before the distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

We are writing today on behalf of the Legislative Engagement Committee of Journey Home regarding S.B./H.B. No. 6659: An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

Journey Home coordinates the homeless response system in the Capitol Region and serves as the backbone support agency for the Greater Hartford Coordinated Access Network (CAN) and the Central CT CAN. They work every day with the warming centers, emergency shelters and street outreach programs, and rental assistance programs. Journey Home works with more than 100 programs to prevent as many people from becoming homeless as possible, and to house as many people as they can as quickly as possible. They also provide donated furniture and household goods to people moving from homelessness to housing.

Connecticut is facing unprecedented challenges to preventing and ending homelessness. Connecticut's homeless response system is overburdened, historically underfunded, and confronting a statewide workforce shortage. This Committee can make a difference by investing \$50,000,000 to rescue the Homeless Response System, which is critical to funding vital front-line staff, community-based operations, cold weather emergency response system, and more.

Housing is a human right and homelessness is a prime example of the failure of our society to take care of its citizens. The traumatic experience of homelessness often negatively impacts people for years even after they are housed. The \$50,000,000 contained in this bill will help rescue the homelessness response system and change the trajectory of this vulnerable population in our state. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Board Members of the Legislative Engagement Committee, Journey Home:

Dwayne Jackson, Chair, Journey Home

Mae Maloney, Vice Chair, Journey Home

Alana Blum, Board Member

Maryann Burns, Board Member

Michael Fishman, Board Member

Jeffrey Kotkin, Board Member

David Scheinerman, Board Member